

For [REDACTED] NSC BRIEFING

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14 July 1955

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FRENCH NORTH AFRICA

I. Violence continued during past month in Algeria and Morocco but Tunisia quiet.

II. In Algeria:

A. French military buildup continues; army probably now numbers more than 110,000.

B. Military action proceeding against rebel bands.

1. Despite local gains local security director sees little chance for success before next spring.

2. Administration asking for extension of state of emergency for additional 6 months.

C. Economic sabotage stepped up--burning grain fields ready for harvest, alfa and cork stocks, destruction vineyards.

D. Reform program approved in principle only --priority remains on ending hit-and-run

attacks, by rebels and terrorists.

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- E. National Assembly debate postponed from 5 to 26 July to await report of parliamentary investigating committee.
- F. Governor General said to be conferring with nationalist leaders even though French settler element strongly opposes.
- G. Moslem Algerian deputies protest current repression, warn that rebel bands may be supplanted by widespread underground.

III. In Morocco:

- A. New resident general, Gilbert Grandval, arrived 7 July.
- B. Despite enthusiastic reception of Grandval by Moroccan natives in Casablanca, no diminution of terrorism.
- C. True to reputation as man of action has "cleaned house" by ousting 8 of 12 top Residency officials--most old-time Morocco hands.

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D. Indications he will continue police investigation of French settler counterterrorist organization.

1. This has aroused strong settler antagonism.

E. Grandval may now take some action to replace present unpopular sultan. No indication yet what solution he or Paris advocates.

1. Nationalists still hold out for return ousted sultan.

2. Many moderate Moroccans favor regency council.

3. Settler element demands status-quo.

4. Berber chieftain, El Glaoui, publicly demands no change, privately admitted that return of ousted Sultan would be least unpalatable solution to him.

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a. El Glaoui influence in Residency hit rock bottom under Resident General Lacoste. May now attempt to reinstate himself in Grandval's good graces.

b. El Glaoui has no real influence among Moroccans; past reputation as leader largely result of French public relations.

IV. In Tunisia, situation somewhat happier.

A. No violence, no sabotage, no rebel bands.

B. French National Assembly 9 July approved limited autonomy agreement for Tunisia.

1. Council of Republic approval expected before current session adjourns early August.

2. Ratification by President Coty and Bey of Tunis now assured.

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C. Habib Bourghiba, president of Neo-Destour, dominant nationalist party, preparing for peaceful take-over of some administrative functions from French.

D. However, dispute flared between Bey and Bourghiba over Tunisian constitution.

1. Bey wants 2-house consultative assembly, partially indirectly chosen, partially his selection. Wants to select a government which may be ousted only after three no-confidence votes by assembly.
2. Bourghiba wants single house directly elected national assembly.
3. French settlers said to be backing Bey; giving financial support in order to be able to influence composition of assembly. Probably also playing on Bey's latent suspicions that Bourghiba and Neo-Destour seek to abolish monarchy.

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4. Transfer of administrative control may be rough going.

1. Tunisians will want to have immediate maximum control.
2. French civil servants, even with life-time job guarantees, will seek to hinder transfer.
3. Police and justice remaining under French control for initial period--may be factor contributing to confusion.

V. Prospects:

- A. Prolonged military action against Algerian rebels.
- B. Continued violence in Morocco and possibility of build up of rebel bands as in Algeria.
- C. No resurgence of violence anticipated, but considerable political maneuvering likely.

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